AN EXPOSE OF THE EVIDENCE

IN THE CASE OF THE

PARKMAN MURDER!

CAREFULLY COMPILED BY W. E. BIGELOW.

PORTRAIT OF JOHN W. WEBSTER.

BOSTON:
1850.

THE BOSTON TRAGEDY!

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The writer presents to the public, in this pamphlet, a narrative of occurrences as they have actually transpired, in the case of the alleged murder of Dr. Parkman by Prof. Webster, believing that the cause of justice will not be hindered thereby:

Dr. George Parkman suddenly and mysteriously disappeared on Friday afternoon, the 23d day of November last. Little public excitement was manifested until he had been missing for two or three days, and then the anxiety to know his whereabouts became general. Handbills, offering a large reward, were posted on every corner, policemen were sent in every direction, and hundreds of men, in the hope of reward, turned out to scrutinize the highways and by-ways of the surrounding country, rake and scrape the suspicious purlieus of the West End, and grapple in the neighboring rivers and ponds. In the meantime, a rumor was afloat that Dr. Parkman, when last seen, was on his way to East Cambridge, going thither to discharge a mortgage which had shortly before been settled with Dr. Webster, who had paid him a certain sum of money. This rumor was traced to Dr. Webster himself. Search was of course made in the vicinity of Cambridge. Nothing being discovered, the most horrible apprehensions—fears of a secret murder—filled the public mind. But for seven

days, not the slightest whisper of suspicion was breathed against the fair fame of Dr. Webster, so far as was known to the public. On the afternoon of the 30th of November, a portion of the mutilated remains of Dr. Parkman were discovered in a part of the Medical College to which Dr. Webster alone had access. On the evening of the same day, Dr. Webster was arrested and conveyed to Leverett street jail. The prisoner is charged with the murder of Dr. Parkman. The jury of inquest, under the direction of Coroner Pratt (whilom a Methodist preacher, afterwards Colonel of the 3d Regiment, 2nd Brigade, and now Coroner and Deputy Sheriff of Suffolk, as also a deacon in the church, to say nothing of his practice at the bar,) have endeavored to keep in profound secrecy the evidence which came before them. But, notwithstanding this outrageous proceeding of said jury, upheld by neither law nor precedent, a large number of appalling facts have been divulged, and I will now proceed to give, in detail, such as have come to my knowledge, from the most authenticated sources.

It appears by evidence before the Coroner's and Grand Juries, that from the very first disappearance of Dr. Parkman, his agent or private secretary, Mr. Charles M. Kingsley, had his suspicions pointed in the direction of the Medical College, and at Dr. Webster as the only person who could tell of the missing man's whereabouts. Kingsley knew well that Dr. Webster was the debtor of Dr. Parkman—that frequent difficulties had occurred between them—and that, about one o'clock on the 23d day of November, Dr. Parkman left home to go to the Medical College, there to receive the sum of $450 from Dr. Webster, in payment of a note which had been some time due—Kingsley knew that Dr. Parkman had made repeated demands for payment—that Dr. Webster, exasperated, harassed, and desperate, had repeatedly threatened Dr. Parkman in very serious terms;

and Kingsley knew, from inquiries made at the outset, that Dr. Parkman did go to the College between one and two o'clock on the day specified—in fact, after one or two days elapsed, and the excitement became general, Dr. Webster himself admitted the truth of Dr. Parkman's reported visit to his room at that time. Mr. Kingsley was the first to put the police on the right trail; and on Sunday, the 25th, Mr. K., in company with officer Starkweather, visited the College building, and went through every room, with the exception of Dr. Webster's private apartment, (which leads out of the lecture room,) and the laboratory immediately underneath; the doors of these rooms were locked, and no entrance was obtained. Of course, no discovery was made. On Monday, a few of the Police visited the building, and another search was made, with the same result as before. On Tuesday, Mr. Clapp and other police officers went to the Medical College, determined on making a thorough search. They met, at the door, Mr. Ephraim Littlefield, the janitor or superintendent of the college, who resides with his family, in the basement of the building. Mr. Clapp informed Littlefield of his determination, and desired L's co-operation. Littlefield remarked, that the whole building had been thoroughly searched, with the exception of Dr. Webster's private apartments, in which Dr. Webster then was; the officers and Littlefield then proceeded to the door of the chemical lecture room, but the door was locked on the inside. Littlefield knocked, and no one came: he then gave three loud raps with his fist, and in a short time Dr. Webster came, opened the door, and stood a little on one side. Littlefield informed him that the officers had been instructed to make another search for Dr. Parkman, and their duty required them to examine his (Dr. W.'s) rooms, as well as other parts of the College. Dr. Webster was unusually pale, and said nothing; but, motioning to the party, immediately led the way across the lec-

ture room to his own private apartment, immediately in the rear of the desk at which he was accustomed to lecture. Webster opened the door, and the party passed in. Nothing unusual was seen—only tables and shelves, covered with minerals, and bottles and jars containing chemicals. The officers (this party not having any particular suspicions against Dr. W.) looked rather carelessly around, and then inquired for the other apartment. Dr. Webster led the way down the stairs, to his laboratory, a large room on the basement, with a brick floor, and two large windows on the north side, facing the hospital on the right, and the river on the left. Although the searching party noticed nothing particular, at the time, in Dr. Webster's conduct, they have since brought to recollection that the Doctor, on arriving in the laboratory, seemed somewhat nervous and flurried. He pointed hurriedly to various articles in the room, making such remarks as follows:—"Here is my furnace; there are the casks in which I make gas; those are minerals on the shelf," &c. &c. Mr. Clapp being in one corner of the room, approached the Doctor's private privy, a small place built under the stairs. In the upper part of the door of this privy was a pane of glass inserted, which was painted white, with the exception of three or four inches at the top. Mr. Clapp endeavored to look through, and inquired, "What place is this?" Littlefield replied, "That is Dr. Webster's private privy; he has the key." Immediately on this, Dr. Webster started for the opposite corner of the room, and exclaimed hastily, "Gentlemen, here is another apartment where I keep my dangerous articles," and throwing open a door, diverted the officers' attention, and the whole party crossed the room. In the last room nothing was seen but boxes, jars, &c., and the officers made no critical examination of the place. Dr. Webster then threw open the door to an entry leading to the dissecting room, and

the officers soon passed out and left. In this connection I would express my firm belief that, had the officers at that time insisted on seeing the interior of the privy, they would have there beheld the clotted and mutilated carcass of Dr. Parkman.

Thus matters remained for the present, so far as respected searches made by the police. It is well known that Ephraim Littlefield was the first to discover any portion of the remains of Dr. Parkman. This portion of the evidence, as presented to the Coroner's Jury, I will now review.

To Dr. Webster's apartments in the college, from the time of the first occupancy of the building, Littlefield, as janitor, had always had free access. When Dr. Webster left at night, the doors were left unlocked, and, at Dr. Webster's request, Littlefield was in the habit of doing certain chores in those apartments, such as filling water casks, building fires, &c. But—and this is a remarkable fact, bearing hard on the case—from the very afternoon of Dr. Parkman's disappearance, the doors of these rooms, whether Dr. Webster was inside or out, were invariably locked, by night and by day. Littlefield, of course, thought it a singular circumstance; but I do not know that he had any suspicions of the cause for at least two days. On Sunday afternoon, the 25th, a little before dark, Littlefield was standing on the corner of Fruit street, a few rods from the college, conversing with a friend, when Dr. Webster was seen coming up the street towards them. On arriving at the spot where they stood, Dr. Webster immediately mentioned the disappearance of Dr. Parkman, said he had only heard of it that day, and had come in from Cambridge purposely to inquire about it. Some conversation ensued with regard to the matter, and Dr. Webster went on to relate that just before the reported disappearance Dr Parkman had come to his room—that he (Webster) had paid Parkman a note of over $400—that Parkman acted very strangely,

and as soon as he received the money, without stopping to count it, ran up the lecture room, two stairs at a time, and hastily disappeared. While Dr. Webster told this his eyes were bent on the ground, his whole frame shook, and his agitation was such as to be remarked and remembered by both his hearers. Dr. Webster's conduct on this occasion, together with the fact of keeping his doors locked, excited in the mind of Littlefield a suspicion and curiosity not easily to be satisfied. I understand that he, that same night, mentioned his belief that "Webster had killed Parkman," to his wife; that she reproved him for the remark, and said, "Never mention such an absurd idea again to any body." The next afternoon, taking the opportunity when Dr Webster was out of the building, Littlefield, when the tide was low, crept round on the river side of the building, and, after some effort, clambered into the window of the laboratory. He entered the room, and observed that underneath the furnace, (about a foot square,) remained the embers of a very hot fire; the furnace was filled with something, the nature of which he could not distinguish, and was covered with several crucibles, also containing some unknown matter. He also remarked that two barrels of pitch pine kindlings, filled only a few days before, had been nearly emptied; the privy was locked, and he, of course, made no entrance. After a hasty examination of the premises, (satisfied that something mysterious was going on, he was loath to suspect what,) he made his exit from the laboratory by the same way that he entered.

In the meantime, a person went to the City Marshal, and testified that about half-past one o'clock on Friday, the 23d, he saw Dr. Parkman enter the Medical college, and wishing to see him on business, waited upwards of an hour outside the building, but did not see Dr. P. come out; and it is certain that Dr.

P. could not have left the premises without being witnessed. This contradicts Webster's statement, that his business with Parkman was hastily settled, and that Dr. Parkman left immediately. About this time, also, vague suspicions were thrown out by persons doing business in the vicinity, that "when Dr. Parkman's body was found, it would be in the Medical College." All this naturally came to the ears of Littlefield, and only served to confirm him in the opinion that his suspicions were correct. At any rate, on Thursday, he went so far as to inform Drs. H. J. Bigelow and J. B. S. Jackson, of the out-door talk with regard to the college, and his own suspicions of Dr. Webster, telling them that the only place which had not been searched, was the large vault beneath Webster's laboratory, the only opening to which was the small hole in W.'s private privy. The gentlemen were horror-struck, and seemed to think seriously of the remarks made by Littlefield. The only way by which access could be obtained to the vault, except through the privy, or the floor of the laboratary, was by descending through a small scuttle, in a part of the basement used to store wood, some forty feet distant, and after crawling that distance on hands and knees, breaking through a brick wall five courses thick. Drs. Jackson and Bigelow immediately told Littlefield to "effect an entrance to the vault at all hazards, and not to sleep until he had accomplished his object." That (Thursday) evening, Littlefield crept under the basement floor, and, with a hammer and a cold chisel, commenced operations—his wife, all the while, keeping watch above, to see that Dr. Webster did not enter and discover their proceedings. Littlefield worked nearly all that night, but without completing his object. The next forenoon he was prevented from proceeding further, on account of Dr. Webster being in the laboratory. Drs. Jackson and Bigelow were made acquainted by Littlefield

of his proceedings thus far; and Dr. Bigelow anxious to learn the result of the affair, told Littlefield to break into the vault as speedily as possible, and if he found anything, to come immediately to his (Bigelow's) house and inform him; if he was not in, Littlefield was to write his name on a slate in the entry, and proceed to Dr. Jackson's. About two o'clock Friday afternoon, just one week after Dr. Parkman's disappearance,) Dr. Webster left the college, and Littlefield again set himself to work at the wall. In an hour or two he had made quite a large aperture in the wall, and, on gazing through into the vault, there discovered, only a few feet distant, and directly under Webster's privy, two distinct portions of a human body—one, nearly the whole of a man's right leg; and the other the pelvis and the connecting parts. Littlefield gazed but a moment, and then fled in dismay. Hurrying to the house of Dr. Bigelow, Littlefield, with horror depicted on his countenance, could only exclaim, "I've found it, I've found it." It is said that he acted almost like a madman. Bigelow and Littlefield then proceeded to the house of Dr. Jackson, and informed him of the discovery made. Information was conveyed to Marshal Tukey, and he, with a few officers, immediately started for the college. Mr. Kingsley and a few others were also sent for. In a short time the whole party met in the basement of the college building. After a relation of Littlefield's operations, officer Clapp, Mr. Kingsley, Littlefield, and others, descended the scuttle, and made their way to the breach in the wall. After viewing well the position of the parts of a dead body that laid in the vault, the remains were removed to the basement, and placed on a board, near to the scuttle-way. Coroner Pratt, District Attorney Parker, James H. Blake, Esq., and others, had by this time arrived; and a consultation was held, as to what course should be pursued. The Mayor, however, soon made his appearance, and

advised that an entrance to the laboratory be effected. This was soon done, and on examination of the furnace, before alluded to, pieces of bone, parts of a skull, melted gold and silver, false teeth, coat buttons, &c., were found in the ashes. Spots of blood, partly absorbed by some kind of acid, were seen on the stairs leading to Webster's private room above. Not a person present doubted that Dr. Parkman had been murdered on those premises, nor could they resist the conviction that Webster was the murderer.

A warrant was immediately issued for the arrest of John W. Webster, and officers Clapp, Starkweather and Spurr, proceeded in a close carriage to Cambridge, to effect it. They found the doctor at home, pleasantly told him that his presence was required at the Medical College, to assist in another search for Dr. Parkman, and he readily consented to accompany them, conversing quite sociably on the way. He was not informed that he was arrested, until they arrived at the Leverett street jail. Dr. Webster was then conveyed to a cell, accompanied by officer Starkweather, where he remained till nine o'clock. It is stated that while in the cell, Dr. Webster was violently agitated, and (having been previously told of what had been found at the college,) exclaimed, "Has that scoundrel betrayed me?" The remark was immediately noted down by Starkweather. A little after nine o'clock, the prisoner was again brought into the jail office, and was there waited upon by the District Attorney, who spoke very kindly to him, and expressed the hope that he would be able to prove his innocence.

About ten o'clock at night, with Dr. Webster in custody, the party proceeded to the Medical College, in Grove street. On their arrival, Webster was found to be faint and tottering, and required two men to support him. He was led up the front

steps and into the lecture room, and then to the door of his private apartment. He was asked if he had the key to the door, and he replied that he had not. The door was then forced open, and the party entered. Nothing particularly suspicious was seen. Dr. W. was asked if he had the key to his privy, and he replied, "It is hanging up there," pointing to the wall in a large closet, the door of which was wide open. Search was made, but no key found; on being interrogated again, he said that he did not know where it was. (Afterwards, on being searched at the jail, the key was found in his pocket.) The whole party then passed down the stairs, through the laboratory, and into that part of the basement where the remains had been placed on a board. The gentlemen present gathered round, and Dr. Webster was led forward to confront the mangled parts of a human body. On coming in sight of the horrid spectacle, his agitation was intense—the sweat rolled in big drops from his forehead, and he would have sunk to the ground had he not been supported; but he uttered not a word. It was a melancholy scene, and the prisoner was soon hurried away to jail.

The next day (Saturday,) a minute search was commenced in the apartment leading from the lecture room. Stains of blood were found on the floor, and traced all the way down the stairs into the laboratory. Indications of an attempt to obliterate some of the spots of blood with acid were plainly visible. All the ashes in the furnace were taken out, and, on raking them over, a block of false teeth, two inches long, was found. (These teeth were afterwards fully identified by Dr. Keep, dentist, who testified, before the Coroner's jury, that he had, but a few weeks previous, inserted them in the mouth of Dr. Parkman, and produced the original mould, to which the block of teeth fitted exactly.) Four large blankets and a

coverlid were found in the laboratory; those articles are proved to have come from Dr. Webster's house, and could have been wanted for no purpose but to cover up the windows. In the course of the day, officer Fuller, one of the party engaged in searching the laboratory, while poking over a pile of boxes and rubbish in the recess of the room, pulled out an old tea chest, which seemed rather weighty. He forced off the cover, and the chest presented the appearance of being filled with minerals. Taking out a part of the contents, he ran his hand down into the chest, and it came in contact with something soft and damp; a bad odor, arising from the chest, was also observed. Mr. Fuller then turned the chest over, and emptied the contents on the floor. Parts of a human body were found closely packed in tan, embracing the part from the neck to the middle, and that portion of a man's left leg reaching from the knee to the thigh joint. A large sized razor-bladed jack-knife with stains of blood upon it, was also found. The parts last discovered were laid in order with those found on the evening previous, and it was at once seen that they belonged to the same body—all parts being in the same state of decomposition. In the breast of the dead body were discovered two deep wounds, apparently inflicted with the knife found in the chest. Shortly afterwards a human kidney was found in some rubbish in a by-place adjoining the laboratory. Next was found concealed a pair of pants, (identified as Webster's,) besmeared with blood; and then, in the same vicinity, a small hand-saw, clotted with gore. Before the day's search was ended, calcined bones of almost every limb of the human frame were found, and arranged in order. There is a vague story of some large fish-hooks being discovered, which were attached to a cod-line so as to form a grapple, and had some connection with those portions of the carcass found in the vault. I think there is

some truth in the story, but never having had a lengthy examination of the written evidence, I cannot detail the facts on this point. In Dr. Webster's desk, in the upper room, were found four false keys, which could open every door leading into his apartments, as, also, his privy. I cannot divine what was the object of these keys, without it was Webster's intention, if hard pushed, to place them on Littlefield's premises, and change the current of suspicion.

On Sunday, December 2d, a coroner's jury was summoned, and the jury, after viewing the remains, adjourned for a few days, in order that a medical committee might make a critical examination thereof, and pass their opinion as to identity. Every one knows the result of the investigations of the medical committee and the coroner's jury. There were peculiarities on Dr. Parkman's body, most readily identified, and not to be disputed, viz. tufts of hair on his shoulder blades; a scar, caused by a surgical operation, and other unusual marks on portions of his body not proper to be here mentioned.

The Coroner's verdict is well remembered—the startling conciseness of its language—"that George Parkman came to his death by the hands of John W. Webster." Before that jury, evidence of the blackest character was produced; and although the public were astounded at the decided conclusion arrived at by the coroner's jury, that verdict will yet be found to have been fully warranted, our citizens generally are now satisfied, from the recent finding of the Grand Jury of Suffolk; but, whenever the trial takes place, testimony will be presented more deep and damning in its character than the public have yet suspected. Attorney General Clifford, who will manage the case for the government, expresses the opinion that Webster could be convicted on even a tenth part of the whole evidence that can be produced—there is no more doubt in his mind that

Webster is guilty of actually premeditated murder, than that he exists. The evidence of Webster's guilt is entirely circumstantial—but it embraces a multitude of facts, not one contradicting another. I will present a few of such as have emanated, in various ways, from the best and only sources of authority.

A day or two after the disappearance of Dr. Parkman, City Marshal Tukey received from East Cambridge, through the Post Office, a note written on half a sheet of letter paper, badly spelt, and illiterate throughout, informing him that Dr. Parkman had been killed in East Cambridge, and that his body had been brought into Boston and put aboard a ship that had just left port. The letter was evidently in a disguised hand-writing, and so many incongruities appeared in the writer's attempt to spell wrongly, that no credence was placed in it. Afterwards on searching Webster's desk at the College, a half sheet of letter paper was found, corresponding exactly with that on which this letter was written.

The next day after Parkman's disappearance, a check or draft was picked up in the street at East Cambridge, which had been paid Dr. Parkman one or two days before, on account of rent, by one of his tenants. It will be proved that Webster himself dropped that paper; he was seen to open his wallet, as he was walking along the street, take out the paper, and drop it, and it was immediately picked up by a person walking some distance behind him. The two facts last mentioned were evidently devices of Webster, intended to direct suspicion in the wrong quarter.

It is alleged that Parkman entered the College about half past one o'clock, on Friday, Nov. 23; he was seen to go in, but was never seen to come out. From that hour, all the doors leading to Webster's apartments were locked, and Webster was in his rooms nearly the whole time, except when lecturing.

Persons who were employed in a neighboring foundry say that they observed, for two or three nights, a dense black smoke arising from the chimney of that part of the college occupied by Webster; the pitch-pine kindlings were probably then in use.

Webster and his friends say that he was at the house of Judge Fay, in Cambridge, that Friday evening, playing whist. Very true—but it will be proved that Webster came into Boston after 10 o'clock that night; a carriage driver will testify to this, and also that Webster left the college early the next morning, and returned home. Littlefield, I think, testifies that Webster, two or three evenings of the week succeeding the alleged murder, remained at the college to a very late hour—a circumstance he had never known to happen before. There are also witnesses in this case, who testify that they saw Webster in the vicinity of the college late at night, and that he was disguised.

A Cambridge expressman, named Sawin, testifies that, a day or two after the murder, he brought faggots to the college for Dr. Webster; also, a quantity of tan, in some of which a part of Parkman's body was afterwards found packed.

I alluded above to some large fish-hooks, attached to a cod-line. A hardware merchant, in Dock Square says that Dr. Webster came into his store, the early part of the same week he was arrested, and inquired for some large hooks; but not finding any "large enough," as he said, made no purchase. The hooks that were found, however, were traced to another store; and, a few days since, two of the clerks, being asked if they could identify the person who bought them, said they believed they could. They were carried down to the jail, and brought to Webster's cell window. Webster was dressed in a morning-gown, and had on a fancy smoking-cap; the young men thought they could identify him as he then was, but said if they could see him in his usual habiliments, they could tell sure.

Webster was then requested to don his hat and outside coat, which he coolly and readily did, and the clerks then declared positively that he was the person who bought the hooks. Considerable conjecture has arisen in many minds as to the use to which he intended to put the fish-hook grapple. It may be that Webster, after a few days, was fearful that the vault would be searched; an examination had been made of his own apartments, and he perhaps felt safe in that quarter; his object, then, must have been to recover the parts of the body which he had thrown down the privy, and secrete them in some other manner.

There is another remarkable circumstance, which I believe has not been published. Littlefield, in his testimony, says that a sledge-hammer, left by some of the workmen when the building was completed, had been standing in one corner of Webster's apartment for a long time; but a few days before the murder, the hammer appearing to be somewhat in the way, he (Littlefield) carried it down to the laboratory, and stood it against one of the fixtures of the room. And what is singular, when the laboratory was thoroughly searched, this instrument was not to be found. But a woman, who lives near by, testifies that she saw Dr. Webster come out of the college one evening, a little before dark, and, passing near her, she observed that he had under his arm a singularly shaped bundle; it was two or three feet long, and was small round, with the exception of one end; whatever the article was, it was wrapped closely in paper, with twine wound round it. According to the woman's description, this must have been the missing sledge, and I hazard little in saying, it found its way over the railing of Cambridge Bridge.

And now comes one of the most serious points in the evidence. Dr. Parkman held a note for $450 against Webster, which had been long over due. On Friday morning, Dr. Webster called

at Dr. Parkman's house in Walnut street, and left word for Dr. P. to call at the College that day and receive the money due him. Webster admits that he came, and states that the note was paid; but just after Parkman's disappearance, Webster said he had neither received the note back nor a receipt; that Parkman seized the money, and, without stopping to count it, hurried away like a crazy man. The next day after Webster was arrested, officers were despatched to his house in Cambridge, to see if anything suspicious could be found on his premises. Webster's private desk was searched, but nothing particular discovered. The next day after, Webster, in jail, called for pen, ink and paper, and wrote a letter to one of his daughters, and giving it to one of the officers of the jail, desired him to deposit it in the post office. The officer, however, (according to the regulations of the prison, requiring all letters to be examined, and of which fact Webster was probably ignorant,) opened and read it. Most of the letter was an affectionate and fatherly epistle to his daughter; but concluded with a direction to tell her mother to take good care of *that package of papers* he had given her a few days before; the substance of his language was, to keep them secreted by all means. The jail officer immediately informed the police, and Mr. Clapp and others started for Cambridge again. On arriving at Webster's house, the officers saw Mrs. Webster, and stated that they wished to procure that package of papers which the Doctor had given her for safe keeping a few days previous. After little trouble the officers obtained possession, and the papers were examined. Among them was the note for $450 which Webster said he had paid Parkman on Friday at the college. Another note was also found for $2,400, but it had endorsements enough on the back to cover the amount. Among other things in the package was a sort of schedule of instructions, as how to act and what to say

in the event of certain searches and inquiries, relating, of course to the Parkman affair. Here, then, is a piece of evidence no, easily to be gotten over.

Since commencing this article, I have learned, from good authority, that Dr. Parkman was on the eve of exposing Webster, in relation to some swindling transactions of which Webster had been guilty in his business with Dr. P.; such as borrowing money of different individuals besides Dr. Parkman, and giving each security by mortgage on the same property, unknown to each other. Parkman felt very much incensed at this conduct, and had but very recently threatened to expose Webster, besides taking due course of law to recover the money owing him. Dr. Webster had good reason to believe the intentions of Parkman, and his fears led him to concoct a horrid scheme for his own safety. The result of his fears and plans may be seen in the tragedy that followed.

A few days since, Gov. Briggs visited the Medical College, and went over the scene of the murder. He examined the premises carefully, and said he could come to no other conclusion than that Webster was a guilty man.

Mr. Clifford, the Attorney General, says that could he have known such a black and appalling case of premeditated murder was to come under his management, he never could have accepted the office he holds. Dr Webster's friends applied to the Hon. Daniel Webster to conduct the defence, and offered him $2,000 to commence it, but he absolutely refused, and would not touch the money. They then went to Rufus Choate, but with no better success. Mr. C., with all his legal acumen and ingenuity, thought Webster's a desperate case; he said he could conceive of no other defence to be set up, than that Parkman went into Webster's private room, was there seized with a violent fit of ague, and shook himself all to pieces—one part of his

body going here, and another there—some parts down the privy, and others into a furnace, or a box, &c.

It is a fact worthy of attention, that the Grand Jury were unanimous in finding an indictment for wilful murder—a circumstance with grand juries that very rarely occurs.

On Wednesday afternoon last, Coroner Pratt and Mr. Andrews visited the College, and, in making a close inspection of the ashes taken from the furnace, found several small pieces of skull and two filled teeth, additional to what had been previously found.

Allowing that Dr. Webster committed the crime alleged, it remains only to be seen that his crime originated in his great pecuniary embarassments, and the vexation attendant thereon. His own naturally extravagant habits—his endeavors, unwarranted by his income, to keep his family moving in the highest and wealthiest circles—his extreme negligence in meeting his creditors, and his total want of economy—together with the harsh and abusive terms applied to him by Dr. Parkman, his principal creditor, who pressed his demands with the greatest severity—all tended to work him up to the highest excitement his naturally nervous temperament was capable of; to exasperate and madden him, until he conceived the horrible idea of murdering, and forever removing from his presence him who was the immediate cause of his present bitter anxiety, and of whom he had the most dread. There is one fact in his history that has hitherto remained unrecorded, and which, although not affecting this particular case, shows a negligence of duty and justice which cannot but be considered criminal. Dr. Webster's father and family formerly resided in the town of Amesbury, in this State. The father of the Dr. is well remembered by aged citizens, and was reputed a very worthy man. It is understood at Amesbury—and there can be no doubt of the

fact—that, by the will of Dr. Webster's father, the sum of fifty dollars was to be paid annually to the children of a near relative. One of those children is now in the almshouse; and Dr. Webster, who was charged with the duty of paying the orphans the paltry sum alluded to, has never complied with the requirements of the will; and at the present time the sum of $800 is due from Dr. Webster to these unfriended individuals. Repeated applications have been made to the Doctor to pay this amount, but always without success. I am told that Webster in his opinions, is a professed materialist—believing only in human existence, and, at death, annihilation of the soul.

John W. Webster was born in Boston about the year 1793. He was the son of Redford Webster, who formerly resided in the north part of the city. The father of Mr. Webster died, we believe, in the year 1834, leaving a fortune of about forty thousand dollars. In 1823 or '24, the son travelled in Scotland in company with Professor Boue of Paris. Afterwards he went to the Azores islands, where he sojourned for some time and wrote a very creditable work upon the geology of those islands. He returned to this country in 1834, with a valuable collection of minerals, procured by him in his travels, which he sold to Harvard College for the sum of eight thousand dollars. With the assistance of Professor Treadwell, he edited, for a time, the Boston Journal of Philosophy and Arts. In the same year he again visited the Azores, on account of the ill health of his wife, and at that time expressed his intention of resigning his professorship and establishing a sulpher manufactory at St. Michaels. Upon examining the sulpher earths, they were not found to be sufficiently rich to warrant the undertaking, and he consequently abandoned his design, and returning to Cambridge he resumed his professorship.

He occupied the post of Lecturer on Chemistry, Mineralogy,

and Geology at Harvard College from 1834 to 1837, and in the latter year was elected Erving Professor of Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, Mineralogy and Geology. As professor, his salary was but twelve hundred dollars per annum, from which he was obliged to pay his own expenses, and considering that he had only a life estate in the fortune of his father, his income was inadequate to pay his annual expenses, and he was consequently kept in an embarrassed condition.

He frequently complained that he was not properly supported by the University, and lamented that on account of pecuniary difficulties, he was unable to make that progress in his favorite sciences which he so ardently desired. As a mineralogist, he was active and indefatigable, and was continually engaged in collecting the mineralogical specimens which are indiginous to our sister states.

In the year 1837, he delivered his first course of Lectures before the Medical class of Harvard University at the Institution in Mason street, in this city, at which time he succeeded the late celebrated Professor Gorham of this city. At this period the salary of Professor Webster was raised to nineteen hundred dollars per annum.

The following is a copy of the indictment found by the Grand Jury of Suffolk, and on which John W. Webster is to stand trial before the Supreme Judicial Court:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Suffolk to wit. At the Municipal Court of the City of Boston, begun and holden at said Boston, within and for the County of Suffolk, on the first Monday of January, in the year of our Lord 1850, the Jurors for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on their oaths present, that John W. Webster, of Cambridge, in the County of Middlesex, gentleman, on the 23d day of November last, past, at Boston, in the County of Suffolk, in and upon one George Parkman, feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought, did make an

assault, and that he, the said John W. Webster, with a certain knife which he then and there in his right hand had, and held him, the said George Parkman, in and upon the left side of the breast of him the said George Parkman, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and with malice aforethought did strike, cut, stab and thrust, giving to the said George Parkman, then and there with the knife aforesaid in and upon the left side of the head of him the said George Parkman one mortal wound of the length of one inch, and of the depth of three inches of which said mortal wound the said George Parkman then and there instantly died. And so the Jurors aforesaid upon their oaths aforesaid do say that the said John W. Webster him the said George Parkman, in manner and form aforesaid, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace of the Commonwealth aforesaid, and contrary to the form of the Statute in such cases made and provided.

And the Jurors aforesaid upon their oaths aforesaid, do further present that the said John W. Webster, at Boston aforesaid, in the County aforesaid, on the twenty-third day of November last past, in and upon the said George Parkman, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault, and that the the said John W. Webster, then and there with a certain hammer which he the said John W. Webster in both his hands then and there held, him the said George Parkman, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did strike, giving unto him the said George Parkman then and there with the hammer aforesaid, in and upon the head of him the said George Parkman, one mortal wound, of which said mortal wound he the said George Parkman then and there instantly died, and so the Jurors aforesaid do say that the said John W. Webster him the said George Parkman, in manner and form aforesaid, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace of said Commonwealth and contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided.

And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oaths aforesaid, do fur-

ther present that the said John W. Webster, of Boston aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, on the 23d day of November last past, in and upon the body of the said George Parkman, feloniously, wilfully, and of malice aforethought, did make an assault, and that the said John W. Webster, then and there, with his hands and feet, him the said George Parkman feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did strike, beat, and kick on and upon the head, breast, back, belly, sides, and other parts of the body of him the said George Parkman, and did then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, cast and throw the said George Parkman down unto and upon the floor with great force and violence there, giving unto the said George Parkman then and there, as well by beating and striking and kicking of him the said George Parkman down as aforesaid, several mortal strokes, wounds, and bruises, in and upon the head, breast, back, belly, sides, and other parts of the body of him, the said George Parkman, of which said mortal strokes, wounds and bruises, he the said George Parkman then and there instantly died, and so the Jurors aforesaid do say that the said John W. Webster him the said George Parkman in manner and form aforesaid, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace of said Commonwealth and contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided.

And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oaths aforesaid, do further present that the said John W. Webster, of Boston aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in a certain building known as the Medical College, there situate, on the 23d day of November last past, in and upon the said George Parkman, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault on him the said George Parkman, in some way and manner and by some means, instruments and weapons, to the Jury unknown, did then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, deprive of life, so that he, the said George Parkman, then and there died, and so the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oath afaresaid, do say that the said John W. Webster, him the said George Parkman, in manner and by means aforesaid, to the said

Jurors unknown, then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder, against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth aforesaid, and contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided.

DAN'L RHOADES, Foreman Grand Jury.

JOHN H. CLIFFORD, Attorney General.

WITNESSES IN THE CASE.

Ephraim Littlefield, janitor of the Medical College, North Grove Street.

Charles W. Cummings, blacksmith, of No. 2 North Grove st.

Leonard Fuller, iron founder, North Grove street, resides at No. 25 Bridge street.

Seth Pettee, clerk, of Dorchester, Massachusetts.

Zelotes Hozmer, hardware merchant, of Cambridge.

Wiliam W. Mead, merchant, of Watertown.

Betsey B. Colburn, (known as Mrs. Bent,) widow, of Cambridge.

Woodbridge Lord, residence or occupation not known.

Dr. Francis Parkman, clergyman, of Boston, brother of the murdered man, resides in Bowdoin Square.

Nathaniel Waterman, tinman, No. 85 Cornhill, resides in Beach street, opposite Tyler street.

Albert Fuller, brother of Leonard Fuller, and is employed at the West Boston Iron Foundry, owned by Leonard Fuller.

Elias Fuller, another brother of Leonard Fuller, and also employed at the iron foundry, which is only two or three hundred feet from the Medical College.

Gustavus A. Andrews, jailor of the Leverett street jail.

Dr. Jeffries Wyman, physician, of Boston.

Dr. Henry J. Bigelow, physician, of Boston.

Mrs. Caroline M. Littlefield, wife of Mr. Littlefield, janitor of the Medical College.

Robert G. Shaw, merchant, No. 51 Commercial wharf, resides in Beacon street, corner of Belknap.

G. G. Moore, resides at No. 34 Bridge street, (vicinity of the Medical College.)

Nathan C. Keep, dentist, No. 31 Boylston street. Mr. K. was the manufacturer of the mineral teeth used by Dr. Parkman.

Francis Tukey, city marshal of Boston.

Samuel Parkman Blake, dealer in patent leather at No. 7 Central street, resides in Roxbury.

Dr. Winslow Lewis, Jr., physician, No. 81 Boylston street.

Dr. Samuel Parkman, physician, No. 125 Tremont street.

Charles B. Starkweather, police officer, City Hall.

Derastus Clapp, constable and police officer, City Hall.

Asa O. Bateman, police officer, at the West End.

George W. Trenholm, night policeman.

Nathan D. Sawin, expressman, of Cambridge.

Charles M. Kingsley, Custom House, real estate agent of the late Dr. George Parkman, resides in Blossom street.

Samuel G. Adams, police officer, near National Theatre.

Jabez Pratt, one of the Coroners of the county of Suffolk, who held the inquest upon the human remains found at the North Grove street Medical College.

Charles B. Rice, police officer at the West End.

Henry Perkins, unknown.

James W. Edgerley, hardware dealer at No. 3 Union street. Resides at No. 22 Shawmut street.

David C. Perkins, unknown.

Wm. B. Tarlton, police officer.

Edward Hitchcock, medical student, of Amherst.

Dr. Edward Reynolds, Jr., physician, resides at No. 29 Winter street.

George H. Gray, hardware merchant, at No. 57 Milk street, resides at West Cambridge.

Lorenzo L. Whitmore, medical student, of Ashburnham.

Paul Holland, grocer, corner of Blossom and Vine streets, resides at No. 31 Myrtle street.

Dr. Frederick S. Ainsworth, physician, at No. 11 Howard street.

Benjamin Heath, policeman.

Dr. James W. Stone, physician, at No. 6 Bowdoin square.

Wm. N. Tyler, twine manufacturer, corner of Dover street and Harrison Avenue.

There are about twenty-five more witnesses for the government, who have not yet been called upon to recognize for their appearance at court.

The Indictment against Dr. Webster announced to him in Court. With a good deal of privacy, on Saturday Jan. 19th, Dr. Webster was brought up from jail in a carriage, in the custody of officers Harrington and Smith; and a few minutes before one he entered the court room, moving with a quick, nervous step, and was led to a chair behind the bar, and in front of the dock. The expression of his countenance was that of a person just recovering from some severe illness, and permitted for the first time to leave his chamber. It was manifest that his feelings had not been adjusted to the extraordinary scene in which he formed the principal object, and there was an air of exhaustion and suffering in the hasty and uncertain glance he cast around him. Not a moment of delay occurred in disposing of the business for which he was brought up. With visible emotion Mr. Phillips, the clerk, called upon the prisoner to rise, and he promptly obeyed the order, resting his hands upon the rail before him. The clerk then, holding the indictment in his hand, said, in a full and distinct voice—"John White Webster, the grand inquest for the county of Suffolk have returned into this court an indictment wherein you are charged with the murder of George Parkman. This indictment will be certified up to the supreme judicial court, where you will be called upon for trial thereon, at such time as that court shall order. A copy of this indictment will be furnished to you. This court now orders that you be taken back to jail, to be there kept in custody until discharged by due course of law."

Notwithstanding the unquestionable effort he made to listen

to the clerk without displaying any external sign of what was passing within his bosom, the awful declaration, "*for the murder of George Parkman*," caused a momentary change in his features; there was a contraction of the muscles of the mouth and an increased pallor overspread his face.

The instant the order of the court was announced by the clerk, Dr. Webster was removed as rapidly as he had entered. The whole proceeding did not occupy four minutes.

The appearance of Dr. Webster indicated nothing beyond affliction, and when his long established position in life, the terrible charge brought against him, and the distressing condition of his large and interesting family, are considered, his present situation must be regarded as afflictive beyond all conception, whether he be guilty or innocent. Among the spectators were many who had attended his lectures in college and elsewhere, and many others who had heard him testify in court in cases of murder by poison, and we may venture to say that not one of either class could bring themselves to realise fully the dreadfu change in his situation. He was withdrawn from court ere they could persuade themselves, either by his living presence, or by hearing his name called, that the well known, lively, restless, bustling, now amiable and now petulant Professor Webster, was a prisoner at the bar, charged with the wilful murder of an old friend, even more distinguished for personal peculiarities than he was himself. The audience generally were profoundly affected by his appearance, and not one vindictive expression was even whispered in reference to his case.

The New York Herald, on remarking on the recent developments of facts in the Parkman case, says:—"It is precisely what might have been expected, as the inevitable result of the extraordinary and star-chamber-like proceedings of the judicial authorities in Boston, in their conduct in regard to this horrible

tragedy. When we learned that they had determined upon keeping the proceedings secret—when we saw that they resorted to the extraordinary course of locking the coroner's jury in a third story room, and examining the witnesses in the most private manner possible, and were determined to keep the public ignorant of their doings, or of the character of the testimony—we saw at once that the whole case would be argued, and tried, and decided, as far as it could be decided in such a way, by the newspaper press of the country; and that the cause of justice, as well as the prisoner's case, would be seriously impaired. The result, therefore, is just what we expected. Dr. Webster's friends have been endeavoring to prove his innocence; and now the friends of Dr. Parkman have undertaken to deny it. It is on this account that we publish the astounding development which are contained in the communication in another column, above referred to.

"The policy of the police authorities of Boston in withholding all preliminary information from the public concerning this tragedy, and in refusing to publish the testimony taken before the coroner's jury, was the most stupid, foolish and imbecile that could be pursued in this age of the world. The idea that it was adopted lest the cause of justice might be prejudiced, is absurd and ridiculous. We live in a day when light and information on every subject are sought by the public mind; and the public were entitled to the fullest information in the possession of the authorities, concerning that dreadful tragedy. They had no right to withhold it from them. But they did withhold it, and the consequences are before us. Every statement, every mis-statement, every suspicion, well or ill-founded, every breath, every inuendo tending to show the innocence or guilt of the party now in jail awaiting his trial on the charge of murder, has been caught, distorted, and sent on the wings of the press

to the four quarters of the world. This was in consequence of the mystery with which the authorities thought proper to enwrap the whole affair; and it was done for the purpose of ministering to the natural appetite of the public, to know all the particulars of the tragical and horrible affair."

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

WITH

REFERENCE TO THE PARKMAN CASE.

It is said, that only a few days previous to the murder, Dr. Parkman applied to the officer who disposed of the tickets for Professor Webster's course of lectures on chemistry, to know if there was a sufficient balance due to the professor to take up his note. This circumstance is said to have greatly incensed Professor Webster, who, on Friday morning, called at Dr. Parkman's house, and left word, "if he (Dr. P.) wanted his money on that mortgage to call at the college about one o'clock that afternoon." Dr. Parkman left his house, S Walnut-street, at one P. M., on Friday, November 23, for the purpose of attending to this engagement. On his way to the Medical College he stopped at a grocer's at the corner of Vine and Blossom streets, and purchased some articles, which he ordered to be sent to his house. From this store he went direct to the Medical College adjacent, which he was seen to enter, but from which he was never seen to depart.

It is said that Drs. Parkman and Webster were classmates in college. For a quarter of a century or more Dr. Webster has occupied a distinguished position in the scientific world as professor of chemistry and mineralogy in Harvard University, of which the Medical College in Boston is a branch. Dr. Parkman was once an associate editor of the Medical Journal, published by Wells and Lilly. At the same time Dr. Webster was an associate editor of a general scientific journal, whose title has escaped us, published by Hilliard, Gray and Co.

Dr. Parkman was very wealthy, and had been for many years largely engaged in real estate transactions and in loaning money on mortgages. Dr. Webster has been more successful in acquiring fame as a scientific man than in making money, and was in debt to Dr. Parkman. Out of this relation sprung disputes between them.

Some of Dr. Parkman's friends, assuming that Dr. Webster killed Dr. P., suppose that an angry altercation occurred at the interview on Friday, and that Dr. Parkman, who occasionally used very blunt language, said something which so exasperated Dr. Webster, that the latter suddenly dealt him a mortal blow with some implement at hand, and then, to conceal the rash and fatal deed, resorted to the means for disposing of the body which have been described above.

I learn that a Mrs. Bent, who resides in Cambridgeport, near the bridge, testified before the Grand Jury to the fact that the Professor had called upon her a day or two after the disappearance of Dr. Parkman, and asked her if she could not state that she recognized the Dr. on passing the bridge. Upon her replying that she did not, he urged her to reflect carefully and discover whether such a circumstance could not be recalled to her mind. She still insisted upon her ignorance in the matter, and Professor Webster exclaimed "Alas! I fear the poor Doctor has been murdered."

It will be recollected that the toll-man on the other end of the bridge, has asserted that the Doctor passed him on the afternoon of the day of his disappearance. This was known to the Professor, and his effort to induce Mrs. Bent to make a similar

statement, for the purpose of corroborating the toll-man, would seem to indicate a deeply laid scheme to get the impression abroad that the Doctor had passed over the bridge after the period of his entering the Medical College. On the night of his arrest, the Professor requested the officers to take a different course from that in which they were then going, for the purpose of calling on Mrs. Bent, and interrogating her again on the subject.

Dr. Webster's personal appearance has undergone no change, notwithstanding his close confinement. He occupies a cell on the ground floor of the old jail. His furniture consists of a rocking chair, a small table, and an iron bedstead, upon which is a mattress. The doctor spends most of his time in reading, and has a large number of books in his apartment. He is quite cheerful, and, considering the greatness of the crime with which he stands charged, is in remarkable spirits. His friends are allowed to confer with him, whenever they desire to do so, and are also permitted to send him any luxury they please. He is allowed constant light, at his own expense, throughout the night, in his cell.

The trial will probably take place on the 15th of March, and it will be unquestionably, one of the most interesting and exciting criminal trials ever had in our country. The facts, which will be divulged at that time, will startle everybody, and the confessions of Mr. Webster at the time he was arrested, will convince the Jury and the world that he is guilty.

Biegelow, W.E., ed., *The Boston tragedy,* W 600 B592b 1850
Condition when received: The thirty-two page pamphlet was in poor condition. The pages were very yellow, brittle, and acidic. The acid was adversely affecting the paper. Copious fly droppings were noted on all pages, especially on the foredges. The thread-sewn binding was broken and the spine, tenuously held together by a hat pin that secured the central sewing station. All edges, especially the foredges, were extremely tattered and torn with numerous small edge losses. In addition, there were several small light brown liquid stains throughout the text.
Conservation treatment: In preparation for the forensic exhibition shoot in September, the booklet would be chemically stabilized; however, tattered appearance would be maintained for added pathos in the exhibition. The booklet was first surface cleaned on the covers using a block polyvinyl eraser (Staedtler). Accretions were removed using a scalpel. Sewing thread remnants and the hat pin were removed from the spine. The pages were submerged in a series of baths using deionized water conditioned to pH 8.0 using a combination of ammonium hydroxide (Nasco) and calcium hydroxide (Nasco). The paper was allowed to dry thoroughly between each of three baths. The third bath was conditioned using only calcium hydroxide. As a result, a minute amount of alkaline reserve (calcium carbonate) was amalgamated and precipitated in the paper. After washing, the paper was lighter in color, discoloration from fly specks was diminished, and the acidic content was lower. Minor mending was carried out using kozo paper (various thicknesses, Japanese Paper Place) and secured using an adhesive mixture consisting of wheat starch paste (zin shofu, BookMakers) and methylcellulose (A4M, Talas). Most paper losses were not filled in order to maintain the worn appearance. All gutters were reinforced with the above mend materials. The booklet was brought into plane, folded and sewn with linen thread.
Conservation carried out by Rachel-Ray Cleveland
NLM Paper Conservator, 8/2005